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HOMEMAkers' CHAT

Wednesday, March 27, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FOOD SHOPPING TIPS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A. and the Consumers' Counsel, A.A.A.

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Once again here are tips from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to help you in planning meals and shopping for food for the family.

Many of the favorite fresh vegetables coming to market from the South this month will continue to be scarce for awhile. For a month anyway fresh lima beans, snap beans, beets, cucumbers, egg plant, okra, green peppers, squash, and tomatoes will be few and far between. The weather has slowed up the crops of these vegetables and delayed planting of new crops for the spring and summer markets. So during April you won't find as many fresh vegetables for sale as usual this time of year. But in May and June they'll be coming in a rush. You can expect good buys in fresh vegetables if you wait until May and June.

Perhaps you've noticed fresh tomatoes haven't been very plentiful. More tomatoes will be coming to market during April because the new spring crop from Florida will be ready. But even so, fresh tomatoes will be less plentiful than usual. Florida has only about a third as many acres of tomatoes ready for harvest this April as last. But in May get ready for fresh tomato salad. Florida shipments will probably be unusually heavy in May.

As for new potatoes, they aren't as plentiful this month as they were a year ago. Ordinarily shipments of new potatoes get larger in April. But this year new potatoes won't be as plentiful as old potatoes for a month at least. The markets have about as many old potatoes on hand as they had last year.

Now for news of two favorite spring foods--asparagus and strawberries. From California comes the tip that asparagus may be more plentiful than last year for the next few months. The early spring asparagus crop promises to be about a tenth larger than in '39. Most of this early asparagus comes from California. Ordinarily California sends about two-thirds of its asparagus crop to the canneries and ships one-third fresh.

As for strawberries, they won't be so plentiful until April. During April you can start whetting your appetite for shortcake. For in April berries from Alabama and Louisiana come in. And the berries in these States did not suffer from the frost as the Florida berries did. Shipments of strawberries generally grow larger in April. Louisiana, the largest strawberry-producing State in the country, markets its berries usually from the middle of March to the middle of May.

While we're on the subject of spring foods, here's some news about spring lamb. The lamb crop this year will be about the size of last year's crop. But because of better weather where most lambs are raised, more spring lambs will be going to market before the first of July. Spring lambs start going to market usually in April, but you don't find large supplies of lamb at the meat markets until May and June. During March and April most of the lamb on the market is grain-fed. This year the supplies of grain-fed lamb may be a little smaller than last year. During the spring and early summer months lamb supplies are smallest.

In April the pigs born in the fall are ready to go to market. And that means larger supplies of pork in April. Ever since last October the markets have had plenty of pork for sale. Last spring's large pig crop brought the big supply of pork to market in the fall. Now last fall's pig crop will bring plenty of pork to market for the coming months. So you can count on much more pork for sale this spring than last.

Every thrifty housewife these days keeps posted on the official list of surplus foods under the Food Order Stamp Plan because these foods are likely to be low in price and good buys for economy meals. At present the official list includes 15 foods. These are: apples, fresh pears, grapefruit, oranges, butter, eggs, pork products, including lard, dry beans, dried prunes, raisins, onions, wheat flour, whole wheat or graham flour, rice, hominy grits, and corn meal.

That is all the food shopping tips from the Department of Agriculture for today. In a couple of weeks more tips will be coming in. In the meantime, if you want to make the most of the pork on the market, you can call in the aid of 2 leaflets telling you how to cook this good meat. Write to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. for Leaflet No. 45 called "Pork in Preferred Ways," or for Leaflet No. 81 called "Cooking Cured Pork." As long as the free supply lasts you are welcome to a copy of either or both to help you in cooking pork by the latest and best methods.

